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20 Apr 60

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Intelligence System SAMOS

REFERENCES: Memo from SecDef to SecAF, dtd 17 Nov. 59; subject "Transfer of the SAMOS Development Program to the Department of the Air Force."

On 10 April 1958 [illegible] of the SAMOS program were assigned a national priority in order to obtain [illegible] early operational capability. An attempt to gain this early capability [illegible], undoubtedly, interfere with the research and development program and can only have the effect of delaying the overall program. At the present time many questions are unanswered about the capabilities of SAMOS that could have been answered by now if the development project had been carried out as originally conceived. Apparently, both the contractor and the technical support committees have been confused and slowed down by the impact of operational requirements before the actual capabilities of the system have been established on a developmental basis. This condition has led to advance planning, including facilities and hardware procurement, [illegible] operational [illegible] for the SAMOS program.

It is necessary that the elements of the system be thoroughly tested in order to evaluate this particular method of reconnaissance. In order to concentrate funds where most sorely needed, [illegible] area and to speed up the program, it is recommended [illegible] at the earliest possible [illegible] of SAMOS. [illegible]

[illegible]

In preparation of the revised development plan [illegible] recommended that the program be [illegible] further recommended [illegible] SAMOS [illegible] capability and reliability of the system [illegible]

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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS. DOD DIR 5200.10

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The revised development plan should provide for continued R&D in the following areas, listed in order of priority:

a. Recoverable photo package (E-5). ITEK study 50" to 70" } 5 ft

b. E-1 and E-2 R&D read-out packages. 6" – 12" 36" } both resolution

c. E-3 study completed. study, R&A tape rather than film processing

d. Read-out photo package completed } Subsys E ground eqpt

e. One set of research and development ground photo read-out equipment, consisting of the minimum required to evaluate E-1 and E-2 package, completed.

f. Only one tracking and acquisition station equipped with a minimum number of "E", [redacted] and "T" components, without data links as planned, established at Vandenberg AFB.

g. E-1, E-2 and [redacted] packages continue on the present R&D basis. Read-out for tapes to be processed by a limited subsystem "T" program with no emphasis on quick processing to obtain variety at this time.

h. Subsystem "T" completely recreated and limited to the use of existing recovery to exploit the intelligence wherever possible. Equipment developed for processing, storage, recall and viewing must improve equipments now in use that perform the same functions but do not have the capacity to handle the E-1/E-2 collection capability. Individual equipments will be integrated as a system to permit testing (utilizing use of a block that will also be provided for R&D evaluation) as well as maximum exploitation of the end results.

The staff of the Office of the Assistant Director for Special Projects, [redacted], will be available for advice and assistance in regard to the above recommendation.

Herbert F. York

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